

should look like. He was a handsome man. I repeat, he had this great voice, and he was very tall, stood very erect. I was always very envious of how he could stand so tall, and he has such a sense of humor that is quite remarkable. Sheila is his friend. She visits him in his home in South Carolina now, and she has helped me keep in touch with Fritz Hollings.

Then she worked for me. I was so fortunate. I was looking for someone to do my fundraising during a very difficult election I had before me. I knew who I wanted, but I didn't know that I could get her. Well, we worked things out. And it wasn't just because I offered her more money, it was because she wanted to work with me, and I am so happy that came to be.

For 14 years, she has been part of my team—and I mean part of my team. During that entire time, she has done an incredible job doing my Senate business as a candidate. Doing Senate business here as the Assistant Secretary, she has been the best.

So after having worked for the Senators I have mentioned, including me, when the time came to fill the role of Assistant Secretary of the Senate, she was a perfect candidate, and in this position she has not disappointed me once.

Everyone who has ever worked with Sheila knows she is a meticulous planner. If you want something done—an event—and done right—and I mean done right: help setting up the program, what the flowers are going to look like, what the food is going to be, what time it should start, what time it should end—and she is very, very precise on when it should start and when it should end—we learned that last night during a farewell for a number of Democratic Senators—she really spares no effort, leaves no detail unattended.

Her time here in the Secretary's office has been a smashing success. It is not easy to attend to the needs of 100 Senators—100 Senators—Democrats, Republicans, Independents, their families and staffs, but Sheila handles it with skill and with grace. That is why many call her the “Mayor of Capitol Hill,” and for good reason.

Whether she is escorting the President's daughter to the inauguration podium in her bright pink coat, or planning a ceremonial dinner in Statuary Hall, Sheila does the job exceptionally well.

Just one example, 2 years ago the Senate hosted the screening of Steven Spielberg's now legendary film, “Lincoln.” There were some real big-shots there. Spielberg, Daniel Day Lewis, the guy that wrote the script—they were all there. So there were, frankly, a lot of prima donnas there, including of course all the Senators. So it was an exceptionally difficult feat to pull off, coordinating attendance for 100 Senators who all wanted to go to see these famous people.

She was preparing a panel discussion for the cast and crew, all while fol-

lowing strict Capitol protocols as to who could go where and what we could do in the places we went. But she had a secret weapon, and that was she. She didn't know it, but that was the secret weapon. She took care of every possible problem and coordinated every single detail, even down to a makeshift concession stand in the lobby. It was a wonderful event, a marvelous event, because for the briefest moment it brought the Senate together in the spirit of unity that we haven't had in some time. It all happened because of her.

She is very devoted to her family, her mom Lois, about whom she has talked endlessly, and of course her deceased father. I was trying to help in comforting her as I could when she lost her mom Lois. I can't imagine how proud her parents would be—and are, from wherever they are, looking down on us—at the work that Sheila has done in her life. I know how proud I am of her now, as she prepares to move on to her next chapter of life, and I will do everything I can to help that chapter be a good one. I wish her the best.

I, along with the entire Senate, thank her for the steadfast diligent service she has rendered as Assistant Secretary for the last 8 years.

Sheila has a dog she loves, little Ava, and I hope she takes that little dog on a trip to have a good time. I am sure she will.

On a personal note, I wish to say publicly how much she has meant to me. She has been really a part of my family the last 15 years. As most everyone knows, my wife was involved in a really bad accident. Who was there? Sheila. Battling, as she did for 1½ years, ravaging breast cancer, who was there? I would come home after having been unable to do the things around the house. I would have a refrigerator full of food. Not junk—it was wonderful food. She did that not once, not twice, but many, many times. She is my friend—my forever friend.

She interacts with my children as if they were her siblings. She knows everything about them. So even though I will not see her at work every day, as I have for 14 or 15 years, she will always be part of my life.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

TRIBUTE TO SAXBY CHAMBLISS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to say a few words about my friend and colleague, Senator SAXBY CHAMBLISS.

SAXBY, as we all know, is the ultimate southern gentleman. He is a man of his word. He is blessed with the charm and the drawl only a Georgian could possess, and he is far too modest. He shouldn't be. He has a lot to be

proud of as he looks back at a storied career here in Congress.

We are talking about one of our Nation's top experts on intelligence and national security. We are talking about a standout champion for the men and women of our military. We are also talking about a Senator who became chair of the Agriculture Committee just 2 years into his first term. That is really quite an accomplishment. But once you get to know SAXBY, it isn't all that surprising.

Before he came to Congress, SAXBY was a smalltown ag lawyer. He still lives in a rural area—a peanut and cotton-farming region far removed from the bright lights of Atlanta. SAXBY has a feel for the issues that could only be acquired from actual on-the-ground experience. He understands the real-world impact of what we discuss here in Washington, and he cares.

On top of that, he has the disciplined work ethic of a minister's son—which makes sense, because he is one. SAXBY is usually the first guy to raise his hand when there is an assignment no one else wants. That is what we saw for him on the Gang of 6, a politically difficult and work-intensive committee if there ever was one.

But SAXBY came here to get things done—not to posture. He takes on projects with the kind of drive and courage we don't often see.

How courageous is SAXBY? Well, he accepted an invitation to go quail hunting with Vice President Cheney, and he lived to tell the tale. The senior Senator from South Carolina remembers the trip very well. He had to be persuaded by SAXBY to come. He still suspects that SAXBY's real motive was to give Cheney a second target.

It wasn't the only time SAXBY cheated death with the Vice President. Lindsey recalls a meeting in Baghdad with SAXBY, JOE BIDEN, and the Iraqi Prime Minister. Afterward, they boarded a plane and came under fire. Here is what SAXBY said: “I guess the meeting didn't go that well.”

So SAXBY is a comedian. But he is also courageous. He is also persuasive. He is really good at getting his way. It is kind of what we would expect from a former door-to-door fruitcake salesman. After hawking loaves of spiced dough, there is not much SAXBY can't sell at this point.

We know he was persuasive enough to convince Julianne to marry him. SAXBY and Julianne met at the University of Georgia. She was Sigma Chi's pledge-class sweetheart—and she soon became SAXBY's sweetheart. The Chamblisses have been inseparable ever since.

Now, just in case SAXBY ever becomes his own category on Jeopardy, here is an interesting piece of trivia. The president of the same pledge class became SAXBY's Democrat challenger in 2008. The two fraternity brothers are still friendly. Here is how this gentleman remembered SAXBY from college. He said he “looked old.”